

August 2023

EDITION 493

BIRD OF THE MONTH IN THIS ISSUE



Spangled Drongo
Esk, 2022

Outings & Events Details	P1
Club Reports	P2-5
Notices & Articles of Interest	P6-12
Bird of the Month	P13
Members' Notes	P14



OUTINGS & EVENTS 2023

Wednesday September 13th	West Creek Toowoomba Charles Dove 0417 422 302
Sunday October 1	Ravensbourne Mick Atzeni 0499 395 485

Website: www.tboc.org.au

Postal address:

P.O. Box 4730

Toowoomba East QLD Australia 4350

Email: tboc4350@gmail.com

Phone: 0499 395 485

PLEASE CONTACT THE LEADER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND

The Toowoomba Bird Observers Newsletter
is published monthly.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter
is 28th September 2023**

Charles powerart@bigpond.net.au

2023 CHALLENGE
200 species as at 6/7/2023
Please submit your sightings for 2023

Management Committee:

President	Mick Atzeni
Vice-president	Sandy Robertson
Secretary	Peter Everest
Treasurer	Ann Alcock
Media officer	Ann Alcock
Editor	Charles Dove
Outings Coordinator	-
Records Officer	Pat McConnell
Facebook Admin	Sandy Robertson
	Mick Atzeni
	Ann Alcock

MIDWEEK WALK

West Creek Kearneys Springs

Date: Wednesday 13th September 2023

Meet location: Corner of Lemway Ave and Marwedel St., Kearneys Spring
<https://goo.gl/maps/TYdi7a5xLibzXMBp8>

Time: 8:00am.

Approx 4km - Please bring morning tea

RSVP: To Charles Dove by 12:00 midday Tuesday 12th September 2023
Txt 0417 422 302 or email powerart@bigond.net.au

Outing details: Easy Walking

In the event of inclement weather contact Charles Dove

Closed footwear required.

In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.

WEEKEND WALK

Ravensbourne National Park

Date: Sunday 1st October 2023

Leader: Michael Atzeni

Meet location: Gus Beutel Lookout, National Park Road

Start time: 7:30am.

RSVP: To Michael Atzeni by 12am Saturday 30th September 2023
Text 0499 395 485

Outing details: 2 bushwalks, varied grades. Both locations have facilities
Bring Morning Tea and Lunch –

Closed footwear required.

In the event of inclement weather contact the leader.

MID-WEEK WALK REPORT *Wednesday 9th August 2023*

PITTSWORTH

A small group of keen birdwatchers gathered at Rotary Park in Pittsworth, it was great to catch up with Kay & Kevin former long-term members of TBOC and now living in Victoria.

A normal chill in the air for this time of year but with an added breeze making the chill factor a bit cooler than we needed. We set out from the park heading towards the Springs near the Pittsworth sewage ponds, making a short stopover at the corner dam of Clifton and Boundary Road opposite the golf course with reasonable number of sightings -including a Black-fronted Dotterel, a pair of Australasian Grebe, Pied Stilt, Grey Teal and Masked Lapwing along with a number of other water bird species on and near dam.

Moving down to the springs on Spring Street we found it a bit quieter than usual, most likely due to cold breeze getting a lot stronger. A large number of House Sparrows hiding in the scrub kept us busy trying to see and ID them, a Great Egret slipped in to the side of us in the Perrier Gully creek, out of sight once it landed. The Nankeen Kestrels and Black Shouldered Kites kept our eyes skyward as

we slowly walked along the road with a number of the small birds flitting in and out of treelined area adjacent the sewage works catching our sight as well; Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Willie wagtails as well as a few Superb Fairy-wrens.

A surprise was the Restless Flycatcher putting on a show near the stables on the opposite side of the road with the Striped Honeyeater continually calling. The Golden-headed Cisticola were down in numbers since we were here a week ago, but still managed to get a few images along with the Superb-fairy Wrens. We decided to head off back to the Rotary Park for morning tea and stopped along the Boundary Road to check out a few trees, mainly just the Noisy Miners and a few Grey and Pied Butcherbirds along the way.

After morning tea a few of us headed to Wyreema to see if we could manage to see the Ground-cuckoo Shrikes and the Banded Lapwings which had been seen from a few members of TBOC, but on arrival the roadworks was in full swing with no sign of the 2 species we were seeking

In all a great day out with great company.
Charles Dove

Wednesday walk Pittsworth 9 th August 2023.		6 persons	38 species
Australian Wood Duck	Pied Stilt	Laughing Kookaburra	Torresian Crow
Grey Teal	Black-fronted Dotterel	Superb Fairy-wren	Restless Flycatcher
Pacific Black Duck	Masked Lapwing	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Magpie-lark
Hardhead	Galah	Noisy Miner	Golden-headed Cisticola
Australasian Grebe	Little Corella	Striped Honeyeater	Welcome Swallow
Little Pied Cormorant	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Butcherbird	Common Myna
Eastern Great Egret	Rainbow Lorikeet	Pied Butcherbird	Zebra Finch
White-faced Heron	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Australian Magpie	House Sparrow
Black-shouldered Kite	Musk Lorikeet	Grey Fantail	
Nankeen Kestrel	Red-rumped Parrot	Willie Wagtail	

A few images from Pittsworth midweek walk

images by Tony Bond and Charles Dove



Restless Flycatcher



Pied Stilt



Golden-headed Cisticola



Nankeen Kestrel



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo



Superb Fairy-wren



Australasian Figbird



Nankeen Kestrel

WEEKEND WALK REPORT Saturday 19th August 2023

Lockyer Valley wetlands, 19 Aug 2023

by Mick Atzeni

Those five who gathered at Lake Apex were rewarded for braving the cold, windy weather with a nice haul of 76 species in the Lockyer. A quick scan of Lakes Freeman and Apex yielded the usual suspects plus a couple of Chestnut Teal and an Australian Hobby.

On to Lower Tent Hill where the raptor list ticked along with Nankeen Kestrel, Whistling Kite and a distant Swamp Harrier along Cross Rd. At Colquhons Rd dam, we added Yellow-billed Spoonbills, and a few bush birds including a White-throated Gerygone that I'd initially thought sounded like a Western Gerygone based on its call; a reminder to not rely on call alone for separating these two species, which can occur together.

Heading to Peacheys Swamp, our run of luck with raptors continued, this time, a Spotted Harrier and Brown Falcon in the same field of view, then a couple of minutes later, a Wedge-tailed Eagle and Black Kite in quick succession. At Pecheys, there were a couple of Pink-eared Duck, a Great Egret and a Black-fronted Dotterel but little else. A search for another gerygone that we could hear calling was unsuccessful but we picked up a Grey Fantail and Striated Pardalote for trying.

Next stop was Lake Galletly. It rarely disappoints. We were quick to spot a female Blue-billed Duck but ended up having to walk down the northern side to see a male. There, we also saw another pair of Chestnut Teal, an uncommon but probably under-reported species in the Lockyer because of the challenge separating juveniles and females from Grey Teal. The Pink-eared Ducks numbered 200+ and it was fascinating to take the time to watch the feeding pairs moving in a tight circle. I'd always thought there was a courtship element to this behaviour. However, a check of the literature confirmed that's not the case. Our ninth raptor species for the outing then graced the scene—a magnificent adult White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

After a return trip to Apex to pick up cars, we headed to Karrasch's Lagoon. En route, we added yet another raptor in Black Falcon, albeit a very brief look. Surprisingly, Karrasch's Lagoon was almost devoid of birds. The only addition to the list was a Spotted Dove. We chose Lowes Rd Swamp for a bite to eat thinking it would be less windy there. It wasn't. Nevertheless, we enjoyed the salad rolls, chocolate cake and a hot cuppa (thanks Jimsie!), and another Wedgie and Brown Falcon.

Lockyer Valley wetlands, 19 Aug 2023		5 members	76 species
Brown Quail	Little Pied Cormorant	Australian Hobby	Striated Pardalote
Magpie Goose	Little Black Cormorant	Black Falcon	Noisy Miner
Plumed Whistling-Duck	Australian Pelican	Purple Swamphen	Brown Honeyeater
Black Swan	Eastern Great Egret	Dusky Moorhen	Blue-faced Honeyeater
Australian Wood Duck	Intermediate Egret	Eurasian Coot	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Pink-eared Duck	Cattle Egret	Pied Stilt	Golden Whistler
Australasian Shoveler	White-faced Heron	Black-fronted Dotterel	Rufous Whistler
Grey Teal	Australian White Ibis	Masked Lapwing	Pied Butcherbird
Chestnut Teal	Straw-necked Ibis	Galah	Australian Magpie
Pacific Black Duck	Royal Spoonbill	Little Corella	Grey Fantail
Hardhead	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Willie Wagtail
Blue-billed Duck	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Cockatiel	Torresian Crow
Australasian Grebe	Whistling Kite	Rainbow Lorikeet	Magpie-lark
Rock Dove	Black Kite	Pale-headed Rosella	Welcome Swallow
Spotted Dove	Spotted Harrier	Red-rumped Parrot	Fairy Martin
Crested Pigeon	Swamp Harrier	Laughing Kookaburra	Tree Martin
Bar-shouldered Dove	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Superb Fairy-wren	Common Starling
Tawny Frogmouth	Nankeen Kestrel	White-throated Gerygone	Common Myna
Australasian Darter	Brown Falcon	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Double-barred Finch

Addendum

What do you do when you're done in the Valley? Beeline to the Athol-Wyreema Road to check out the reported Banded Lapwings, and hope a Ground Cuckoo-shrike shows up. No luck with the latter but it was pleasing to find the lapwings. I hadn't seen one for years. To finish up, we looked for Black Falcon and White-winged Fairy-wrens near Wyreema and managed to find both. A nice way to finish.

NOTICES & ARTICLES of INTEREST

Goombungee 12th August 2023

Story and Images by Tony Bond

On Saturday 12th Aug a small group of 9 bird lovers were treated by Sonya to an early morning stroll at her Goombungee property. The morning was clear and bright and promising to warm up as we started off. However as soon as we cleared the shelter of the farm buildings a very brisk wind blew up and many wished they had not left jackets in their cars. However, as quickly as it started, the breeze died down again and it was very pleasant thereafter.

Around the yard we were greeted by a group of Tree Martins with the ever present calling of Striated Pardalotes in the nearby pepper trees. A pair of Common Starlings were perched high on a dead limb, their plumage glistening in the morning sun, and sharing the same tree was a Feral Pigeon. Red-rumped Parrots were seen, while Little Corellas, Galahs and Sulphur-crested cockatoos cruised above. Our stroll initially followed a track with open paddock on one side and reserve of established trees on the other. The first spot on this track were a pair of Cockatiels on a fence. In more pepper trees were both Golden and Rufous Whistlers and Yellow-rumped Thornbills. Further on and we came across Willy Wagtails, Superb Fairywrens, Pale Headed Rosellas and more Red-rumped Parrots.



Heading back to the yards we were welcomed by a flock of Apostlebirds and Welcome Swallows.

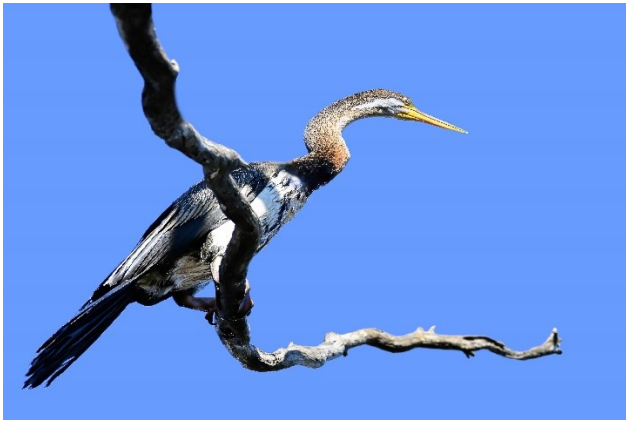
We then headed into to grassy woodland area where we came across Grey-crowned Babblers, Currawongs, White-winged Choughs, King Parrots, Cattle Egrets and many more. On a dam were Grey Teal, Pacific Black Ducks, Australian Grebe, Black fronted Dotterels and Darters.

After a short stroll back, we adjourned to the verandah where Sonya kindly laid on a morning tea. This was interrupted by more Superb Fairywrens in the garden and a pair of Striated Pardalotes foraging in the base of a hanging basket. A pair of Straw-necked Ibis glided by and in the distance a Nankeen Kestrel was spotted - bringing the total count for the day to 45.

Thanks to Charles for coordinating, to Jennie for keeping the list, and to Sonya for her hospitality and for inviting us to share this magic spot.

bird list by Jennie Bond		33 species	
Australian Wood Duck	Black-fronted Dotterel	Striated Pardalote	Australian Raven
Grey Teal	Galah	Noisy Miner	Magpie-Lark
Pacific Black Duck	Little Corella	Brown Honeyeater	White-winged Chough
Australasian Grebe	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey-crowned Babbler	Apostlebird
Rock Dove	Cockatiel	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	Welcome Swallow
Spotted Dove	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Golden Whistler	Tree Martin
Crested Pigeon	Australian King-Parrot	Rufous Whistler	Common Starling
Australasian Darter	Pale-headed Rosella	Grey Butcherbird	Common Myna
Little Pied Cormorant	Red-rumped Parrot	Pied Butcherbird	House Sparrow
Cattle Egret	Laughing Kookaburra	Australian Magpie	
Straw-Necked Ibis	Superb Fairy-Wren	Pied Currawong	
Nankeen Kestrel	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Willie Wagtail	

A few more images from Goombungee by Tony Bond



Australasian Darter



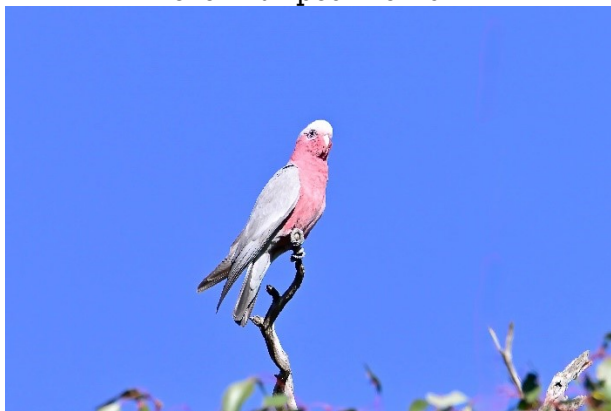
Grey-crowned Babbler



Yellow-rumped Thornbill



Scaly-breasted Lorikeet



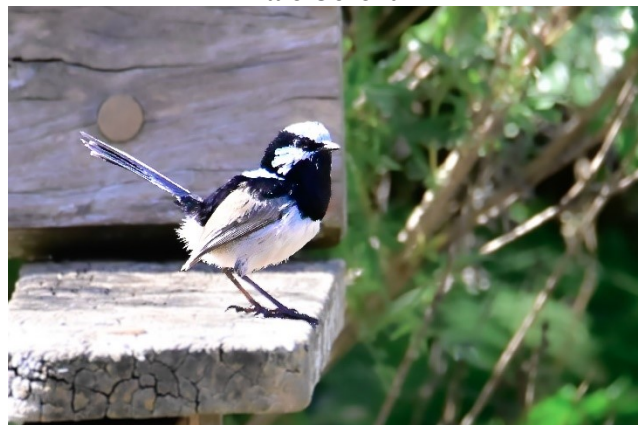
Galah



Little Corella



Cockatiel



Superb Fairy-wren

ARTICLES OF INTEREST:**Interesting little one...**

by Chris Cameron

My current composting spot is in pretty open country near Irvingdale, a bit of Boxthorn, but mostly Rhodes Grass and stuff along fence lines.

There have been Wrens there intermittently all the time I have been in this spot ... all brown birds, until a couple of days ago when this little bloke showed up!

Obviously, he is just getting his adult plumage, still a lot of brown feathers They are incredibly shy as a family, unusual for Wrens very hard for me to get close, even in a car...

**Links**

A fragile ecosystem for a bird on the brink - ABC Kimberley.
<https://www.abc.net.au/kimberley/programs/breakfast/wren-fires/102679004>

ABC News: After weeks of love and care, this once-starved Tawaki penguin is heading home to New Zealand.
 Release days are exhilarating but full of worry for wildlife carer Tracey Wilson. She's saying goodbye to a feathered friend who washed ashore in Victoria, thousands of kilometres from home. [Read the full story](#)

ABC News: Scientists stumped by critically endangered hooded plover spotted 850km north of its usual habitat. Exactly what the juvenile bird — dubbed T7 — was up to on his holiday on the NSW North Coast remains a mystery. But conservationists say its epic journey can teach us a lesson on how to better protect the species. [Read the full story](#)

Seals in a 'frenzy-kill' most likely culprits as beheaded penguins and dead gannets wash up on NSW beaches
 Wildlife rescuers believe seals are behind the unusual deaths of birds washed up on beaches near Batemans Bay and Currarong, and say it is possible they learnt the behaviour from seals off South Africa. [Read the full story](#) Shared from [ABC app](#)

Vet crafts special shoes to help injured magpie Birkenstock and other hurt birds find their feet again
 A Sunshine Coast vet is helping injured birds by creating shoes to assist their recovery, with her latest patient a magpie named after a popular brand of shoes. [Read the full story](#) Shared from [ABC app](#)

Huge power outage with an unlikely culprit: a fish dropped by a bird <https://www.smh.com.au/world/north-america/huge-power-outage-with-an-unlikely-culprit-a-fish-dropped-by-a-bird-20230820-p5dxwi.html?btis>

Not a single emperor penguin chick survived spring in parts of Antarctica <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/not-a-single-emperor-penguin-chick-survived-spring-in-parts-of-antarctica-20230822-p5dykw.html?btis>

Welcome to a special birding edition of the Science Times newsletter.
https://messaging-custom-newsletters.nytimes.com/dynamic/render?campaign_id=34&emc=edit_sc_20230804&instance_id=99233&nl=science-times&productCode=SC®i_id=80766492&segment_id=141115&te=1&uri=nyt%3A%2F%2Fnewsletter%2Fbd750ee3-2722-5d80-a8a3-049a7395e1a0&user_id=01ab75409e0580e2de52b3a1b018530b

Shared bird's nest
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-03/indigenous-knowledge-saving-golden-tipped-bats-black-summer/102669214>

The day a near extinct bird wandered onto Lake Cargelligo's main street.
<https://aboutregional.com.au/the-day-a-near-extinct-bird-wandered-onto-lake-cargelligos-main-street/431168/>

Why is the ibis often grubby, and the egret always clean?
<https://www.paperbarkwriter.com/why-is-the-ibis-often-grubby-and-the-egret-always-clean/>

BIRD OF THE MONTH

SPANGLED DRONGO

Scientific Name: *Dicrurus bracteatus*

Atlas Number: 673

image by Charles Dove

Text courtesy <https://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

DESCRIPTION:

The Spangled Drongo has glossy black plumage, with iridescent blue-green spots (spangles), a long-forked tail and blood red eyes. Sexes are similar, but the female is slightly smaller. Occasional white spotting can be seen on the upper wings of both sexes. Young birds are sootier black without the spangles and the eye is brown. The Spangled Drongo is noisy and conspicuous, usually active, and frequently aggressive to other species.



SIMILAR SPECIES

Several other species are glossy black with red eyes. The Metallic Starling, *Aplonis metallica*, (21 cm - 24 cm) is found on the north-east coast, and has black plumage, brightly glossed with green and purple, a bright red eye and long tapered tail. The adult male Common Koel, *Eudynamys scolopacea*, (40 cm - 46 cm) is larger and lacks the spangles and fish tail.

DISTRIBUTION:

Spangled Drongos are found throughout northern and eastern Australia. Also found in New Guinea and eastern Indonesia. Closely related species occur through south-east Asia to India, China, and the Philippines and on some south-west Pacific islands.

HABITAT:

Spangled Drongos prefer wet forests, but can also be found in other woodlands, mangroves and parks. They tend to avoid more dense forest types and rainforest interiors. Birds are more common in the north, and are often seen either singly or in pairs.

SEASONAL MOVEMENTS:

Migratory; Individuals from the northern areas of Western Australia and the Northern Territory migrate northwards to Indonesia, while the eastern Australian birds migrate to New Guinea. Some Drongos in the south-east and central-east, however, remain in the same area or head south, occasionally turning up in Tasmania.

FEEDING:

The Spangled Drongo is usually seen perched on an open branch or telegraph wire, where it awaits a passing insect. Once seen, its prey is pursued in an acrobatic display, and is caught in the drongo's slightly hooked bill. The Spangled Drongo then returns to its perch to eat its victim. The prey is guided into the bill with the assistance of sensitive, long, wire-like bristles bordering the bill (rectal bristles). Insects are also taken from foliage and from under bark; fruit and nectar also form part of its diet.

BREEDING:

Spangled Drongos normally have only one clutch per season. Both adults participate in building the nest, which is a simple, shallow cup of twigs, vine tendrils and grasses, held together with spider web. It is placed in a horizontal fork of tree, normally toward outer edges and up to 10 m – 20 m above the ground. Both sexes incubate the eggs and care for the young. Spangled Drongos actively defend the nest against intruders.